

## Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /149 W

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R 221630Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2599

AMEMBASSY MADRID

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1142

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SS

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: SPANISH INTERPRETATION OF GIRM POLICY

SUMMARY: DISCUSSED GIRM REACTIONS CURRENT SPANISH SAHARA CONTROVERSY WITH SPANISH CHARGE, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM CONSULTATIONS MADRID. CHARGE MADE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS: GIRM PUTTING NO RPT NO PRESSURE ON MADRID TO MODIFY ITS STATED SPANISH SAHARA POLICY; GIRM MINFORNAFFS HAS REPEATEDLY INFORMED SPANISH HIS GOVERNMENT IN BASIC AGREEMENT WITH MADRID'S APPROACH TO INDEPENDENCE (I.E. VIA REFERENDUM); GIRM HAS SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT SPANISH TROOPS REMAIN IN TERRITORY THROUGH REFERENDUM AND DURING AT LEAST INITIAL YEARS SAHARA INDEPENDENCE; THOUGH IT HAS REFRAINED FROM FOLLOWING MOROCCAN LEAD IN DESPATCHING DELEGATIONS SEEK SUPPORT IN ARAB AND OTHER CAPITALS, GIRM IS QUIETLY APPROACHING AFRICAN AND ARAB FRIENDS SEEKING CONTINUED BACKING FOR UN, OAU, AND MUSLIM CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR SAHARAN REFERENDUM.

1. IN HOUR-LONG AUGUST 21 DISCUSSION, SPANISH CHARGE CONFIRMED OUR IMPRESSION THAT GOM AND GIRM CONTINUING QUIET, UNDER THE TABLE COOPERATION ON SPANISH SAHARA ISSUE. CHARGE SAID MAURITANIAN  
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FOREIGN MINISTER MOUKNASS HAS PRIVATELY AND REPEATEDLY ASSURED

SPANISH THAT GIRM IS IN BASIC AGREEMENT WITH MADRID'S PROPOSALS FOR SAHARAN REFERENDUM ON INDEPENDENCE, AND THAT DESPITE MAURITANIAN CLAIMS TO TERRITORY, NOUAKCHOTT WOULD ACCEPT SAHARAN VOTE FOR INDEPENDENCE PROVIDING REFERENDUM SUPERVISED BY UN. CHARGE, THEREFORE, EXPECTS THAT GIRM WILL WELCOME SPANISH ANNOUNCEMENT (USUN 2897) ITS INTENTION HOLD PLEBICITE UNDER UN AUSPICES DURING FIRST SIX MONTHS 1975. CHARGE PREDICTED, HOWEVER, THAT GIRM WOULD FIGHT ANY MOVE GIVE MOROCCANS OBSERVER OR OTHER REFERENDUM ROLE.

2. AS REGARDS CONTINUED SPANISH MILITARY PRESENCE IN SAHARA, CHARGE STATED GIRM HAS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED SPAIN RETAIN TROOPS IN SAHARA BOTH DURING REFERENDUM AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE. SPANISH BELIEVE GIRM WISHES STIME ANY POSSIBLE PREEMPTIVE MOVES BY RABAT WHICH COULD LEAVE IT WITH COMMON BORDER WITH MOROCCO AND WOULD PREFER SPANISH TROOPS GUARANTEE SECURITY OF NEWLY INDEPENDENT SAHARA AS BUFFER AGAINST POSSIBLE MOROCCAN IRREDENTISM. AT SAME TIME, SPANISH SUSPECT BUT CANNOT PROVE THAT GIRM BEGINNING ENCOURAGE NOMADIC MOORISH CLANS MIGRATE INTO SAHARA IN PREPARATION FOR PLEBICITE AND MAY DECIDE TO GIVE SOME SORT OF OFFICIAL STATUS TO THE FLEDGLING AND AS YET INACTIVE SAHARAN POPULAR LIBERATION FRONT, WHICH NOMINALLY BASED IN MAURITANIA. ASSUMPTION IS THAT GIRM BELIEVES SUCH MOVE NECESSARY IN ORDER COUNTER MOROCCAN CLAIMS.

3. THOUGH MAURITANIA CONTINUES MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE IN SAHARA CONTROVERSY, SPANISH CHARGE CONFIRMED THAT GIRM IS NOT ENTIRELY INACTIVE. OVER PAST MONTH, FORNMIN MOUKNASS HAS APPROACHED MOST RESIDENT AMBASSADORS WITH PLEA THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS SUPPORT UN, OAU AND MUSLIM CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS BACKING SAHARA REFERENDUM ON INDEPENDENCE. SAME APPROACHES HAVE BEEN MADE IN ARAB AND AFRICAN CAPITALS WHERE GIRM MAINTAINS DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION.

4. WITH PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH HEAVILY INVOLVED WITH OVERSEAS TRAVELS AND FOREIGN VISITORS DURING PAST EIGHT WEEKS AND WITH MOUKNASS CURRENTLY TRAVELLING IN BLACK AFRICA, LOCAL MEDIA HAS PLAYED DOWN SAHARA ISSUE. ISSUE COULD, HOWEVER, BE WARMED UP AS RESULT SPANISH ANNOUNCEMENT ON PLEBICITE AND WITH RETURN FONMIN MOUKNASS FROM ZAIRE THIS WEEK. FOR THEIR PART, SPANISH EMBASSY HERE MAINTAINS NORMAL RELAXED ATTITUDE. SPANISH AMBASSADOR HAS DEPARTED FOR VACATION ON FAMILY ESTATE AND IS NOT EXPECTED  
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RETURN FOR AT LEAST ONE MONTH.

5. COMMENT: FROM WHERE WE SIT, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT GIRM IS BIDDING ITS TIME ON SAHARAN ISSUE BETTING (ALONG WITH ALGERIA--ALGIERS 1675) THAT ANY NEW RESOLUTION PASSED BY UNGA THIS FALL WOULD REINFORCE PREVIOUS UN AND OAU RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR SAHARAN INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM UNDER UN AUSPICES. MEANWHILE, GIRM IS WORKING QUIETLY TO DRUM UP AFRO-ARAB SUPPORT FOR ITS POSITION

WHILE KEEPING TO MINIMUM ANY VERBAL ATTACKS ON MOROCCAN POLICY  
IN ORDER RESERVE SOME FACADE MAGHREB UNITY.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INDEPENDENCE, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 AUG 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** boyleja  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740233-0618  
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**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** boyleja  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 17 JUN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <17 JUN 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2003 by boyleja>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SPANISH SAHARA: SPANISH INTERPRETATION OF GIRM POLICY SUMMARY: DISCUSSED GIRM REACTIONS CURRENT SPANISH SAHARA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PDEV, SS, MR, SP  
**To:** STATE MADRID  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005